

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSSAG NKP THAI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056210

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, EAID, CV, VS

SUBJECT: E AND E: USE OF AID-CHARTERED DC-8 RICE AIRLIFT
FLIGHTS FOR PASSENGERS FROM PHNOM PENH TO SAIGON

REF: (A) PHNOM PENH 4496; (B) SAIGON 2716

1. FOR PHNOM PENH: WITH REFERENCE PARAS 1 AND 2 OF REFTTEL,
WE BELIEVE THAT GVN SHOULD USE ITS OWN SUFFICIENT ASSETS
SHOULD IT DESIRE TO EVACUATE VIETNAMESE FROM PHNOM PENH.
ASIDE FROM THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE REACTIONS OF THE KHMER IF
WE WERE TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH A MOVE, WE BELIEVE THE
PRECEDENT SET BY THE US WOULD LEAD TO OTHER HEAVY PRESSURES
FROM OTHER COUNTRIES FOR ADDITIONAL LARGE-SCALE EVACUATIONS
WHICH WE COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT WISH TO FULFILL.

2. WITH REGARD TO EVACUATION OF KHMER EMPLOYEES OF THE USG,
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WE BELIEVE THAT THEY MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY EVACUATION, TO

THE EXTENT THEY SO WISH.

3. FYI: WE HAVE OF LATE BEEN QUERIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF EVACUATING KHMER EMPLOYEES OF THE MEDIA, AS WELL AS THE TCNS FOR WHOM YOU ARE NOW PROVIDING, BUT HAVE REPLIED WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT SUCH KHMERS SHOULD BE EVACUATED NOW IF THE MEDIA FEELS THIS IS ADVISABLE. WE HAVE STRESSED THAT EMBASSY SIMPLY CANNOT INCLUDE THIS CATEGORY SINCE IT IS UNABLE TO GUARANTEE EVACUATION: A SITUATION WHICH WOULD BE UNFAIR BOTH TO THE KHMER CONCERNED AND THE USG.

4. FOR SAIGON: WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE GVN WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT WE WOULD BE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO IMMEDIATELY ACCEDE TO THEIR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE EVACUATION 600 VIETNAMESE FROM PHNOM PENH VIA CHARTERED DC-8S. WE FULLY SYMPATHIZE WITH VIETNAMESE DIFFICULTIES AND THE PRECEDENTS WHICH WOULD BE SET, WE WOULD NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EVACUATION WHICH IS LIABLE TO HAVE AN ADVERSE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON KHMER IN ANY EVENT, AN EFFECT WHICH WOULD BE INCREASED BY US PARTICIPATION. WE BELIEVE GVN HAS SUFFICIENT ASSETS TO EFFECT EVACUATION IF IT IS DESIRED. FULL OFFICIAL US PRESENCE BEING MAINTAINED PHNOM PENH IN PART FOR FOREGOING REASON. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT FOR USG TO PARTICIPATE JUST NOW WOULD HAVE ADVERSE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON CURRENT CONSIDERATION OF VIETNAM AID REQUEST IN WASHINGTON.

5. IF NECESSARY, EMBASSY SAIGON MIGHT EXPLAIN TO THE GVN THAT THE FEW PEOPLE WE ARE AUTHORIZING TO COME OUT ON BACK-HAUL CHARTER DC-8 FLIGHTS ARE THOSE WHO WANT TO LEAVE AND FOR WHOM WE HAVE ACCEPTED FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVACUATION. THEIR EARLY, VOLUNTEER EVACUATION HELPS US TO KEEP THE NUMBERS OF POTENTIAL EVACUEES FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO MANAGEABLE LEVELS. INGERSOLL

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